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Tobias Smollett (1721 – 1771), surgeon -writer on the Continent: culture, health cure, food and final destination

There are numerous reasons that prompted around six thousand Englishmen during the eighteenth century to embark on what Richard Lassels, a Catholic priest, aptly termed the Grand Tour in 1670. These travelers, predominantly men but also some women, were often aristocrats or members of a wealthy middle class, accompanied by literate servants. They undertook a long and perilous journey; they were meticulously prepared and organized, with deliberate goals. During the Enlightenment, the desire for wider education prevailed, particularly through aesthetic exploration in the fine arts, direct engagement with scholars and scientists, participation in learned discussions in renowned salons, and, importantly, language acquisition. For many Englishmen, travel symbolized a departure from local prejudices, a journey toward new ideas, and an opportunity to expand their social circles, including political and religious connections¹. For upper-class women, travel was closely tied to aspirations for liberty and independence².

Artists, forming a significant community, sought direct contact with the revered masters of the Renaissance and their contemporaries in cities like Naples, Rome, Florence, and Venice. Similarly, musicians pursued great contemporary composers, especially in Venice and Naples, where sopranos and sopranists were active throughout Europe³. New experiences, both socially and intellectually, were commonplace. Travelers often documented their journeys in diaries, offering practical advice, warnings, and notes on customs and traditions to embrace or avoid. Some traveled with the express purpose of publishing their experiences and establishing their reputations; others sought the pleasure of boasting about their visits to exotic places, while the vain fops, aimed to adopt new and singular fashions.

Travel experiences also contributed to the introduction of new dishes into British daily life, although this was not a conscious goal of the Grand Tour. For many, visiting another country meant embracing a new lifestyle. Traveling to Italy implied a degree of tolerance toward Catholicism and a greater understanding of customs perceived as more uninhibited than the English way of life. Living in Italy, where one was less known, facilitated indulgence in clandestine love, gambling, and alcohol, though such behavior would still be censured among the nobility. Traveling to Italy was valued not only for cultural enrichment but also for health benefits. Many travelers believed that the milder climate, intense sunlight, and Mediterranean light had therapeutic effects. Doctors recommended a change of air for those suffering from lung diseases, arthritis, melancholy, or domestic unhappiness, often suggesting Italy as a destination. The journey for gastronomic exploration or to experience the Italian *dolce vita* would have to wait another two centuries. However, attention to food and culinary notes

¹ Cf. *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy 1701 – 1800*, compiled from the Brinsley Archive by J. Ingamells, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1997, from now on *Dictionary*; J. Black, *The British Abroad. The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century*, Chalford, Sutton Publishing, 1992 (reprinted 2003); A. Brilli, *Quando viaggiare era un'arte. Il romanzo del Grand Tour*, Bologna, Il Mulino, 1995; *Grand Tour. Il fascino dell'Italia nel XVIII secolo*, catalogo della mostra, Roma Palazzo delle Esposizioni, 5 febbraio – 7 aprile 1997. A cura di A. Wilton e I. Bergamini, Milano, Skira 1997; E. Chaney, *The Evolution of the Grand Tour*, London, Frank Cass, 1998.

² B. Dolan, *Ladies of the Grand Tour*, London, Flamingo, 2001, pp. 55-86.

³ Cf. V. Lee, *Studies of the Eighteenth Century in Italy*, London, W. Satchell and Co., 1880, in particular: "The Musical Life", pp. 65 – 140 and "Metastasio and the Opera", pp. 141 – 230.

became increasingly frequent during the Grand Tour, particularly in the journals and diaries of female travelers⁴.

In summary, the Grand Tour was a multifaceted experience for English travelers, encompassing education, socialization, and cultural exchange, with food and accommodation playing a significant yet often challenging role in their journey. Wherever they went, the English, who were in general extremely sophisticated or even finicky, took detailed culinary notes, often remarking that English national cuisine was to be regarded as superior to those of the Continent⁵. This sentiment is frequently echoed by the doctor and writer Tobias Smollett (1721-1771)⁶, who, after enduring a series of tragic events—including the death of his only daughter Elizabeth, then 15 years old, and the deterioration of his health due to tuberculosis—decided to embark on a journey with his wife, Anne (Nancy) Lascelles, who had grown up in Jamaica and was a very patient and sturdy traveler. Their aim was to alleviate their recent grief, escape the troubles with English justice stemming from his controversial publications, and seek a restoration of health.

In mid - June 1763, Smollett and a company of four people: his wife, who chaperoned the young Anne Curry, a native of Newcastle, another young lady, called Fanny, and his servant, Alexander Tolloush set sail from Dover, traversed France, and spent a year in Nice. At the time he was an established author, having published notable works such as *The Adventures of Roderick Random* (1748), which chronicles the escapades of a Scottish picaro, and *The Adventures of Peregrine Pickle* (1751). He also produced *The Adventures of Ferdinand Count Fathom* (1753), which foreshadows themes and motifs of the Gothic novel. Additionally, he edited translations of works like *Gil Blas* and *Don Quixote*, and contributed to magazines such as “The Briton”, which supported the First Minister, Lord Bute, who shared his Scottish heritage. Despite his acclaim in England, Smollett did not seek out or engage with the cultural figures of the Continent.

From November 1763 to April 1765 Smollett moved from the French Riviera to Italy, primarily visiting Genova, Lerici, Pisa, Florence, Siena, Viterbo, and Rome, accompanied also by a certain Mr. R. a native of Nice and the usual party. After spending the winter in Nice, and visiting Turin with his servant on February 1765, the Smolletts returned to London in June 1765. The following year Tobias published his controversial *Travels through France and Italy*, an epistolary narrative of his Grand Tour⁷, blending real recipients with imaginary ones, to whom he sent 41 letters, only 8 of which pertained to Italy (September-November 1764). In these letters, he expressed his dissatisfaction with the deplorable travel conditions and with often indigestible food.

Even on the road to Dover, he lamented the inadequate lodging and food, describing wine that resembled poison and an innkeeper who was ungracious to say the least, along with exorbitant prices (p. 3). After facing challenges in Boulogne, he found refuge with a certain Madame B., likely Mrs. Ballantyne, a Scot, who provided him with spacious and comfortable accommodations (p. 8). The city offered good beef, sheep, and pork, and the poultry purchased directly from the market pleased the Smolletts. The claret and beer were commendable, and the summer fruit selection was abundant

⁴ B. Dolan, op. cit., pp. 172 -174; R. Severi, *La mucca in cucina. Cibo e alloggio per gli inglesi del Grand Tour*, in *Cibo e Lifestyle dei viaggiatori stranieri in Italia*, a cura di R. Severi, Moncalieri, C.I.R.V.I., 2015, pp.101-154.

⁵ John Dickie in *Delizia! The Epic History of the Italians and their Food* London, Sceptre, 2007, p.157 remarks bluntly that: “To English tastes, Italian food offered the most alarming evidence of how Nature’s bounty had been spoiled. Most Grand Tourists agreed: with honourable exceptions like *mortadella* and Parmesan., that Italy’s food was generally poor, and eating in the Italian countryside was often a disgusting experience”

⁶ See J. Lewis, *Tobias Smollett*, London, Jonathan Cape, 2003; L. Melville, *The Life and Letters of Tobias Smollett (1721 – 1771)*, Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1927; L. M. Knapp, *Tobias Smollett Doctor of Men and Manners*, New York, Russell & Russell, 1963 (1st ed. 1949); *Smollett, Tobias George*, ed. by K. Simpson in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online, 2004; and *Dictionary*, cit., pp. 873 -874.

⁷ Tobias Smollett, *Travels through France and Italy*, ed. by F. Felsenstein, Oxford New York, Oxford University Press, 1990. The page numbers refer to this edition.

and diverse (pp. 23-24). However, when dining with a Frenchman, Smollett could not suppress his revulsion as the diner repeatedly dipped his tobacco-stained fingers into the ragout, ate, and then rinsed his gums with water, noisily spitting into the glass (p. 34). The Boulogne bourgeoisie adhered to a predictable menu: soup and boiled meat for lunch, roast and salad for dinner, followed by a fruit dessert (p. 35).

In Paris, which he had visited in his youth, he resided at the Hôtel de Montmorency in the Faubourg St. Germain, where he encountered indifference from innkeepers and servants, except when it came to settling bills, and found that life there seemed to cost twice as much as in London (p. 43). The beef was excellent, as were the breakfast pastries and the simple fare of bread and grapes enjoyed by the locals. The French, however, disgusted him for their historical animosity towards the English, particularly regarding what he deemed the absurdity of fashion, since the English imitated the French in all respects (pp.48-51). The women with their faces made up with white lead (Venetian ceruse, skin whitener) and blush, resembled painted masks, and their elaborate hairstyles, volumized by the addition of wigs, slicked with sheep's fat, then curled and sprinkled with powder were a source of opprobrium and ridicule for the mildly misogynist Smollett (pp. 53-54).

After months of enduring French cuisine, characterized by an overabundance of garlic, Smollett declared, "I hate French cookery!" Before departing from Paris, on his way to Lyons, he stocked up on tea, chocolate, cured ox tongues, and sausages, enjoyed a breakfast of bread, butter, and milk, roasted a chicken for the journey, and concluded with a dessert of grapes (pp. 66 -75).

In Montpellier, where he stayed from the end of October to November 13, 1763, he noted the abundance of olive and fig trees, surrounded by vineyards and corn (p. 85). He and his wife stayed at the Cheval Blanc, touted as the best hotel, yet he found it to be a "miserable shack," dark, dirty, and overpriced, prompting him to leave the day after (p. 85). He consulted the renowned Dr. Fizès, who prescribed a diet of daily meat and soup, almost unsalted, while advising against venison, beef and pork, but allowing ample dishes of fresh fruit, and raw vegetables. Smollett, who was familiar with Dr. George Cheyne's *The English Malady*, understood the health risks associated with a sedentary lifestyle, which could lead to poor circulation and melancholy⁸. To counter these issues, Fizès recommended travel, enjoyable reading, and pleasant company, along with a bland diet and limited wine consumption. He was also advised to drink donkey's milk, and to have only soup for dinner (p. 97).

Smollett remained in Nice until September, focusing on his studies, transcribing ancient tombstones, writing, and enjoying sea bathing, which he had previously practiced in Boulogne and credited for significant health improvements. He also paid attention to the local cuisine and the comforts of his accommodations, which included a bedroom and two living rooms. In Letter XIX (pp. 157 -163), he made a detailed list of the local food quality, prices, and specialties. During lean days and Lent, seabirds were eatable, as well as fish. In Nice, the Smolletts consumed turtles from Sardinia, a variety of vegetables, and rarities like white truffles from Piedmont, as well as a special eggplant dish served with a ragout of eggs, cheese, and fresh anchovies. The local market offered capers, under-ripe dates, delicious apples, and juicy melons⁹, with similar melons available in the summer streets of Genoa, Florence, and Rome. Refreshing fruit sorbets (oranges, apricots, peaches) were available in cafes, though the wine was less appetizing due to poor storage practices.

Despite swimming in the sea at Boulogne and Nice and maintaining a focus on his health, Smollett continued to experience symptoms of consumption, prompting friends to encourage him to travel

⁸ Lewis, *Tobias Smollett*, cit., p. 237

⁹ Since Michel de Montaigne in his *Journal de Voyage* and in his *Essais* praised Italian melons, they became quite famous, cf. A. Bettoni, *Cibo e rimedio. I meloni di Montaigne*, in *Codici del Gusto*, a cura di M. G. Profeti, Milano, Franco Angeli, 1992, pp. 265 -274.

south. The idea appealed to him, as he had long desired to see the antiquities of Florence and Rome. Accompanied by his wife, Anne, Miss Anne Curry, and a local citizen, Mr. R., Smollett traveled in a gondola, with four rowers, stopping at a post house in San Remo, which was a filthy large room with a long table and benches. Upon arrival, no one greeted them as the innkeeper was "out for a walk." When he returned, Smollett was assigned a dirty room filled with cobwebs and a floor that "had not been cleaned in the last century". The poorly seasoned food was served with little grace, and he remarked, "You must not expect cleanliness or conveniency of any kind in this country." (p. 200)

The next day, a headwind forced the travelers to remain at the hotel, where they encountered a Franciscan friar who wrote exaggerated letters of recommendation to introduce Smollett to a professor in Pisa (200 – 201). In September, San Remo was adorned with orange groves, lemons¹⁰, pomegranates, and olive trees. They continued their journey, stopping in the evening at Capo di Noli, where they did not go ashore due to their ample provisions: ham, roast chickens, cheese, bread, wine, fruit, and brandy for the oarsmen, who, observing a lean day, refused all meat, exclaiming, "Dio me ne liberi!" (p. 203).

In Noli, the lodgings were even worse than in San Remo. Smollett was besieged by insects and parasites, forcing him to wrap himself in his coat and sleep on a chest. The following morning, there was no milk for tea, a significant inconvenience for the English, especially since local farmers raised goats. Upon reaching Genoa, with its breathtaking view from the sea, the travelers lodged at La Croce di Malta near the port where they enjoyed their stay (p. 205). The Genoese, dressed in black, were frugal yet managed to build opulent palaces, monuments, and beautiful churches. Trade flourished, and the markets were filled with delights, including the finest bread Smollett had ever tasted and succulent beef from Piedmont. Thanks to a Genoese lady's introduction, Smollett and his wife were invited to a "conversazione" (pp.206 – 210).

Equipped with letters of credit for Florence and Rome, Smollett embarked again, spending the night in a house in Sestri Levante owned by a butcher. An unpleasant odor permeated the air due to animal skins hung out to dry. The butcher appeared menacing, and his wife was a formidable woman who served a dreadful dinner that kept Smollett awake all night. The Sestri market was bustling with fish, oil, and *macaroni*, a notable local production¹¹. The bay of La Spezia was rich with olive and orange groves. In Lerici, the Smolletts nearly suffered food poisoning at dinner, and the cramped, airless room forced Tobias to stretch out outdoors on four chairs.

Weary of sea journeys, they decided to reach Pisa by buggy, a light and uncomfortable vehicle. They stopped for dinner at Massa, a charming town in the Duke of Modena's territory. From Sarzana to Tuscany, the land was well cultivated with pastures, olive trees, vineyards, and a long stretch of oak forest leading up to Viareggio, where again the lodgings were horrendous. Consequently, Smollett chose to press on to Pisa, a city that immediately inspired gratitude in him. It was a noble, tranquil town, presenting itself in "majestic solitude" (approximately 16,000 inhabitants), making his visits to its monuments and the Campo Santo quite enjoyable (p. 215).

The travelers rented a carriage to reach Florence, eager to appreciate the picturesque landscape filled with vineyards clinging to elms, maples, and alders. In the city, they visited the widow Mary Vanini (p. 219), an Englishwoman who made her compatriots feel at ease, and who was fondly remembered

¹⁰ Cf. Gigliola Pagano de Divitiis, *Mercanti Inglesi nell'Italia del Seicento*, Venezia, Marsilio, 1990, p. 120. Lemons from San Remo were imported by Great Britain, at the port of Livorno, since the second half of the 17th. Century, along with olive oil from Gallipoli and Bari, raisins and Greek wine (but probably produced in Naples) from Zante.

¹¹ Smollett's writings are full of notations on food and nutrition which have been hardly noticed by his critics. Cf. J. M. Purcell, Smollett on Oat sas Food for Scots, in "PMLA", vol. 53, no.2 (June 1938), p. 629 and N. D. Smith, "The Muses O'lio ": *Satire, Food and Tobias Smollett's The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, in "Eighteenth Century Fiction", vol. 16, no. 3, April 2004, pp. 403 – 418.

in their writings. Smollett became so engrossed in visiting the Uffizi, Palazzo Pitti, and various churches that he neglected to take his usual notes on meals and on his health.

On the road to Rome, they stopped in Siena, where the house “smelled like a privy” and they “fared wretchedly at supper” (232). Their journey continued through Buonconvento, where Smollett quarreled with an innkeeper, Aquapendente, a town filled with beggars, Montefiascone, Viterbo, before finally reaching Rome. In the Eternal City, Smollett rented rooms in Piazza di Spagna, a favored location for the English, and found the accommodations satisfactory, with a helpful host who ensured he was well-fed. He savored the excellent *vitella mongana*, a suckling veal, and selected from a fine array of wines, the Orvieto, a pleasant white wine (p. 240).

He observed several *raw boys*, young Englishmen who were easily cheated by the locals. He received business cards from fellow countrymen, though they were rarely found at home. Only English painters and *ciceroni* frequented the cafes, and Roman salons were accessible only to recommended foreigners. However, there was too much to see in Rome to engage in social matters; he needed to study masterpieces to improve his critical perspective.

In Florence, at the sight of the Medici's Venus in the Uffizi Tribune, he declared: “I cannot help thinking that there is no beauty in the features of Venus; and that the attitude is awkward and out of character.” (p.227). In Rome, he criticized Michelangelo's Deposition in St. Peter's as “something indelicate, not to say indecent,” arguing that the naked male body should not recline on a woman's lap (p. 255). Upon viewing the Pantheon, he felt a profound disappointment, likening it to “a huge cockpit, open at the top.” (p. 258)

His hypercritical judgment was later ridiculed by Laurence Sterne in his *Sentimental Journey through France and Italy* (1768), where he dubbed Smollett “Smelfungus” for “the snarling abuse he heaps on the institutions and customs of the country he visted.¹²”. During Smollett's travels in Italy, another doctor, Samuel Sharp (circa 1700-1778), caught the attention of the witty Laurence Sterne. A famous and affluent surgeon, Sharp had decided to retire from his profession and explore Italy. He was a hypochondriac traveler with a sharp tongue, who, in his *Letters from Italy* (1767), offered hyperbolic and scornful judgments on the country and its people. Probably he is the stern “Mundungus” that Sterne met abroad and “made the whole tour without one generous connection or pleasurable anecdote to tell of; but he had travell’d straight on looking neither to his right hand or to his left, lest Love or Pity should seduce him out of his road.”. Giuseppe Baretti, incensed by the portrayal of Italy as a derelict nation and the incessant complaints of Samuel Sharp, responded with a book titled *An Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy with some Observations on the Mistakes of some Travellers regarding that country*. In it, he clarified that the doctor had only spent a few months (eight months) in Italy, did not speak the language, and had not frequented any palaces or significant salons, thus discussing matters he could not possibly know. This volume serves as a valuable document for comparing customs and traditions between England and Italy, as well as for gaining insight into the lifestyle and daily food consumed by Italians¹³.

According to some critics, “Mundungus” is better represented by the wealthy tourist Henry Errington, but we don’t find the attribution convincing.¹⁴ Sterne, in contrast, found great joy in Italy, hoping to

¹² Cf. L. Sterne, *A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy and Other Writings*, London, Everyman, 1994, ed. by T. Keymer, pp. 24 – 25: “The learned Smelfungus travelled from Boulogne to Paris – from Paris to Rome – and so on – but he set out with the spleen and jaundice, and every object he pass’d by was discoloured or distorted – He wrote an account of them but it was nothing but the account of his miserable feelings.”

¹³ G. Baretti, *An Account of the manners and Customs of Italy*, London, T. Davies, 1768, 2 voll., vol. II, chap. XXX, pp. 187 – 204; chap. XXXIX, pp. 311 – 328.

¹⁴ Ibidem, p. 24 and p. 153 note. Cf. *Dictionary*, cit., p.340: Henry Errington (1738 – 1819), a Catholic met L. Sterne in Rome in December 1765 and they travelled together to Naples and back to Rome. Sterne considered him in his *Letters*. “a good hearted young man”.

cure his tuberculosis. On February 3, 1766, he wrote to his wife from Naples: "I feel infinitely better than before—and I hope to have added at least ten years to my life by the journey to Italy." ¹⁵

Smollett had opinions on every subject, even suggesting that if the Romans prioritized personal cleanliness, they could simply immerse themselves in the Tiber for a daily wash instead of constructing so many expensive heated baths (p. 264). During his return journey, he followed the advice of the banker and agent to the English in Rome, Francesco Barazzi and took the road to Terni, only to discover that it was full of dreadful taverns, bare beds, unglazed windows, and overpriced, unhealthy food. He was so overwrought that he exclaimed: "of all the people I ever knew, the Italians are the most villainously rapacious." (p. 281).

In Civita Castellana, on a lean day, the innkeeper offered bread, eggs, and anchovies, but Smollett declined dinner and opted to sleep on a straw bed, "devoured by vermin" (p. 281). Between Spoleto and Foligno, he described a well-cultivated countryside filled with vineyards, olive trees, mulberry plantations, corn, and grazing cattle. Along the way, he encountered many pilgrims and a Roman princess with her entourage heading to Assisi. At one inn, he requested to stay in a closed room, but the innkeeper refused, explaining that "a filthy beast died lately in that chamber". When Smollett inquired about the beast, the innkeeper, mistaking him for a Catholic German, replied, "an English heretick." (p. 284)

In another inn, in "Camoccia," more likely Camucia (Arezzo), Smollett had to prepare his own dinner, but there was no fire, and the place was infested with rats (p.285). The road to Florence was arduous, and the city remained distant. Smollett realized they would not reach the gates before they closed. The *vetturino* offered to take him to an inn five miles from Florence's gate, but Smollett suspected an understanding between the coach driver and the innkeeper to delay their arrival (p. 287). The inn was repulsive. Despite the heavy rain, Smollett insisted that the postillion was to go on driving, but only received threats. Thus, he and his wife set off on foot on the muddy road, and exhausted, finally reached the Vanini house in Florence, where they were welcomed and treated to clean clothes, a warm apartment, and a hearty dinner (p. 288).

Returning by Pisa, weary from the journey and other uncomfortable lodgings, Smollett contemplated staying for the winter but he was assailed by a great longing for his books and papers, which he had left in Nice. During his return, in Massa, they spent the night in one of the worst inns of the entire trip. Upon arriving in Lerici, the travelers needed to rent a felucca, but harboring prejudices against Italians, Smollett sought assistance from a Spaniard who spoke Latin, who transported them to Genoa. Stopping in Finale Ligure and San Remo, he was back in Nice in April, from whence he returned to England in July 1765.

After such a grueling journey, it is surprising to read in Smollett's final letter that after all the discomfort and frustration he had revitalized himself. He asserted, "I am convinced that this hard exercise of mind and body, cooperated with the change of air and objects, to brace up the relaxed constitution, and promote a more vigorous circulation of the juices which had long languished even almost to stagnation...I am now so well that I no longer despair of seeing ... my friends in England; a pleasure which is eagerly desired" (pp. 294-295). Practically after his tour, in the period from 1765 to 1767 Smollett tried to obtain a consulship at Nice or Leghorn, probably considering this last place in Italy by the sea as a welcoming warm haven. Despite his harsh criticism of Italy and the Italians, in the autumn of 1768, Smollett, his wife, and their friend Anne Curry returned to Italy, settling in Pisa in the Casa Lenzi on the Ponte Grande. Following Anne Curry's marriage to the German-born

¹⁵ *Dictionary*, cit., p. 894. Laurence Sterne (1713 -1768) suffered from tuberculosis even before starting for his Italian journey in 1765, but he enjoyed his travels, often accompanied by friends, so much that, after wintering in Naples, he declared "I'm much recovered in my health, by the Neapolitan Air."

merchant George Brenner¹⁶, who resided in Livorno, the Smolletts also moved to that city, taking up residence in the Villa Giardino, about three miles from the town, near Antignano, under the shadow of the Monte Nero, overlooking the sea. Tobias, who was writing another epistolary novel titled *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771), which narrates a journey from Wales to Scotland, appeared calm, yet his health continued to decline. Once settled in the pleasant retreat of Leghorn, he probably began to revise his Italian experience, perhaps comparing it even with his former life in London, which in the novel is berated as a place where Matt Bramble, the protagonist, suffering from delicate lungs, like the author is “pent up in frowzy lodgings, where there is not room enough to swing a cat;... Human excrement is the least offensive part of the concrete, which is composed with of all drugs, minerals, and poisons, used in mechanics and manufacture, enriched with the putrefying carcasses of beasts and men;... The bread I eat in London is a deleterious paste, mixed with chalk, alum, and bone-ashes;... their veal is bleached... I shall conclude this catalogue of London dainties with that table-beer, guiltless of hops and malt, vapid and nauseous; much fitter to facilitate the operation of a vomit, than to quench thirst and promote digestion.”¹⁷

During his last two years in Livorno the writer was noticed by the English envoy at the court of Tuscany, Sir Thomas Mann, who wrote about him and his last remarkable novel to Horace Walpole¹⁸. Smollett lived quite happily with the Renners and the people of Antignano, busy writing his novel and taking care of his correspondence, with his nephew Alexander Telfer to whom he wrote of the terrible earthquake of January 9 1771, when many people ran away from the village, while he calmly waited for the shocks to subside; with John Gray who described his tour in his letters and asked Tobias to take care of a commission of Parmesan cheese for Thomas Calderwood Esq., Titchfield St. Oxford Road, London; with dr. John Armstrong, who spent two weeks with him at the Villa Giardino, at the beginning of May 1770, when he was touring Italy, and with John Hunter to whom he sent his last will in January 1771¹⁹.

The writer sought relief for his consumption at the baths of Bagni di Lucca, but to no avail. On September 17, 1771, at the age of fifty, he passed away, and his death was officially attributed to an intestinal infection, according to his doctor, Giovanni Gentili; to consumption according to the physician Pera. He was interred in the English cemetery of Livorno, where in 1773 a plain pyramidal monument was erected by his wife with an inscription by Dr. John Armstrong²⁰. Anne Smollett remained in Livorno to live with the Renners and passed away in 1791, sharing a tomb with Anne Curry Renner in the same cemetery of Livorno²¹. In a few years, Smollett's tomb became the major attraction of the cemetery visited by common tourists and writers, such as the Scot Alexander Malcolm, Charles Dickens and Anna Jameson²².

¹⁶ George William Brenner probably born at Bremen, Germany was appointed consul of Livorno by Theodoro Primo (born Theodor B. von Neuhof), King of Corsica, cf. L. M. Knapp, *The Letters of Tobias Smollett*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1970, p. 138.

¹⁷ Cf. T. Smollett, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker*, ed. by A. Ross, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, Penguin, 1986, pp. 149 – 155, Matthew Bramble to Dr. Lewis, London, June 8.

¹⁸ Dr. Doran, “Mann” and *Manners at the Court of Florence*, London, Richard Bentley and Son, 1876, vol. II, pp. 217 – 218. Horace Mann also wrote about the dreary meteorological conditions in Italy: the earthquake at Leghorn, constant rain which literally flooded the Tuscan country side and very low temperatures, unusual for Italy, p. 219.

¹⁹ Cf. L. Melville, *The Life and Letters of Tobias Smollett*, cit., p. 242, 243, 246, 248 – 257.

²⁰ In 1774, his nephew Alexander Telfer had a monument erected in Glasgow, on the banks of the Leven, in the shape of a Tuscan column surmounted by an urn. *Ibidem*, p. 273.

²¹ Lewis M. Knapp, *Ann Smollett, Wife of Tobias Smollett*, “PMLA”, vol. 45, no. 4 (Dec. 1930), pp. 1035 – 1049. She is described as a very mild and descreet woman, interested in painting.

²² Alexander Malcolm, *Letters of an Invalid from Italy, Malta and the South of France*, London, William Clowes & Sons, 1897, pp. 156 & ff., Letter XIII, June 10, 1827; Charles Dickens, *Pictures from Italy* (1846), New York, The Ecco Press, 1988, p. 100 – 101: Leghorn (made illustrious by Smollett's grave); Anna Jameson, *The Diary of an Ennuyée* (1826), p. 321: Leghorn, April 26: “We have visited the pretty English burial ground, and the tomb of Smollett,

which in the true English style is cut and scratched all over with the names of fools, who think thus to link their own insignificance to his immortality”.